

Jeopardy Assessment

Proposed Incidental Take Permit: Stelpflug Quarry (ITP 318)

Species: Blanchard's Cricket Frog

Location: Grant County

Background

Project Information

The Stelpflug Quarry is located near Potosi in Grant County. The quarry is a non-metallic mine that is used for mining material for fill and crushed stone. The active area of the Stelpflug Quarry is approximately 2.5 acres, with walls that reach as high as 120 feet from the floor to the wall edge. Work will involve blasting and processing the blasted material, including movement of blasted material via heavy machinery and crushing and sorting of blasted material. Stockpiles will be maintained of the processed material, entering and exiting vehicles will be accessing the stockpiles to take processed material off site. No washing of the material will occur on site.

Species Information

The Blanchard's cricket frog (*Acris blanchardi*), an endangered species in Wisconsin, prefers ponds, lakes, and a variety of habitats along and adjacent to streams and rivers including, marshes, fens, sedge meadows, low prairies, and exposed mud flats. The species tends to breed in quiet water (no or low flow) and may also move from streams and rivers to adjacent wetlands and ponds. Cricket frogs cannot tolerate freezing or complete inundation for more than 24 hours during the winter and thus seek a variety of microhabitats that provide suitable overwintering conditions, including crayfish burrows, small mammal burrows, rotted-out root channels, seepage areas where groundwater flow prevents freezing at the surface or spaces created by sloughing streambanks. Cricket frogs are active from early March through November. Breeding can occur from mid-May through mid-August, with some larvae not transforming until late September.

Conservation Measures

- All project-related disturbance impacting standing water must take place during the frog's active season (April 8-October 15), but outside of the frog's breeding season (May 20-August 15). This results in a window of April 8-May 19 and August 16-October 15.
- All project-related disturbance not impacting standing water (e.g., uplands) must take place during the frog's active season (April 8-October 15), with no restrictions related to the breeding season.
- Cricket frog removals will be conducted in the disturbance footprint by an environmental monitor prior to each work day/restoration activity. All cricket frogs (and preferably other amphibians and reptiles) found will be immediately removed from the disturbance area and relocated to suitable habitat at least 100 meters downstream from the project site. If cricket frogs are found on the first walk-through of the area, a second walk-through will be conducted. This process should continue until the biologist feels confident he/she has removed as many cricket frogs as possible from the disturbance area. All cricket frogs removed will be recorded (total number removed per walk-through, i.e., 2 cricket frogs removed on first walk-through, 1 cricket frog removed on second walk-through and 0 cricket frogs removed on third walk-through) and reported to the Endangered Resources Review Program (DNRRERReview@wi.gov) on a weekly basis.

- Due to the nature of the site there are no suitable nearby areas within the property can serve as mitigation areas for habitat. The operator (J and N Stone) will make a payment into a Cricket Frog fund setup by the DNR that totals \$4,200 for use by the DNR in other mitigation projects. The payment will be directed to the Department of Natural Resources, Incidental Take account, no later than 12 months after this permit is signed.
- The environmental monitor must have field experience with the cricket frog and its habitat and possess a valid Endangered/Threatened (E/T) Permit or similar authorization for cricket frog removals.
- Any Cricket Frog observed in the disturbance footprint will immediately be removed from the area. All individuals removed will be recorded (total number of each species and date removed) and reported to the Endangered Resources Review Program (DNRERReview@wi.gov) at the conclusion of the project.
- All dead Cricket Frogs found on site throughout the course of the project must be recorded (species, approximate age, possible cause of death), photographed, and reported to the Endangered Resources Review Program (DNRERReview@wi.gov) at the conclusion of the project.
- Erosion control measures will consist of a permanent berm that isolates the spring/seep and manages stormwater runoff.
- Plastic or polypropylene netting associated with erosion matting (also known as an erosion control blanket or erosion mesh netting) without independent movement of strands can easily entrap snakes and other wildlife moving through the area, and cause dehydration, desiccation, and eventually mortality. Biodegradable jute/twine netting with the “leno” or “gauze” weave (contains strands that are able to move independently) has the least impact on snakes. If erosion matting will be used for this project, use the following matting (or something similar): American Excelsior “FibreNet” or “NetFree” products; East Coast Erosion biodegradable jute products; Erosion Tech biodegradable jute products; ErosionControlBlanket.com biodegradable leno weave products; North American Green S75BN, S150BN, SC150BN or C125BN; or Western Excelsior “All Natural” products.
- The completion date of the project for the berm implementation is 10/1/2019. The reclamation date of the quarry is to be determined. Disturbance of habitat will be completed prior to the October 15th deadline and will result in permanent removal of potential habitat.
- Contact information for a wildlife rehabilitator (<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/wildlifehabitat/directory.html>) or veterinarian will be compiled, prior to the project start date, for consultation if any injured Cricket Frogs are encountered.

Jeopardy Assessment

The proposed activity will minimize and mitigate impacts to the Blanchard’s cricket frog and as a result, we anticipate that take of this species will be low. The department has determined that the proposed activity is not likely to appreciably reduce the likelihood of the survival or recovery of the Blanchard’s cricket frog within the state, the whole plant-animal community of which it is a part or the habitat that is critical to its existence.